News Release

US Army Corps of Engineers
Walla Walla District
Public Affairs Office

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River levels to fluctuate during spill tests Feb. 28-March 25

Walla Walla, Wash. -- Boaters should be aware of fluctuating water levels on the lower Snake and Columbia rivers as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducts spill testing at Ice Harbor Lock and Dam Feb. 28 through March 25, Walla Walla District navigation officials announced today.

Although the testing will not lower or raise pool levels outside the normal operating ranges, boaters on the rivers can anticipate level fluctuations on the Columbia River upstream of McNary Lock and Dam, near Umatilla, Ore., between 336-338.5 feet mean sea level and between 338-346 feet MSL immediately on the downstream side (the tailrace area) of Ice Harbor Dam near Burbank, Wash.

"A McNary pool elevation of 336.0 feet MSL is lower than we typically operate. River users should be aware of slightly decreased depths upstream of McNary during the test period," said Cindy Philbrook, a Walla Walla District hydraulic engineer.

"All four lower Snake River dams (Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite) will be operating in concert to store water and provide flows for testing needs at Ice Harbor Dam. Pool fluctuations will also occur within the normal operating range (a five-foot range of depth) at these dams. During the test period, though, fluctuations will be more rapid and more frequent than usual," said Philbrook.

If docked in these areas, boat owners should ensure their vessels are located in deep enough water to avoid damage during the test period.

The majority of the testing will take place when the locks are closed during the District's navigation lock annual maintenance outage scheduled for March 11-25. Corps navigation officials have coordinated with commercial shippers concerning the spillway tests that will occur before the maintenance outage.

"We're being attentive to the navigation industry's needs to minimize any potential impacts to shipping during this period," said Philbrook.

Philbrook also pointed out the possibility of unusual currents at the Ice Harbor lock approach, created by the spill test conditions. "We want the shippers and the recreational boaters to be aware of changes that may occur on the river while we're testing, so they can be safe," she said.

The purpose of the testing is to determine the fish injury rate at the spillway deflectors under various spill conditions. The tests will be conducted using hatchery-raised juvenile chinook salmon, said Mark Smith, a District fishery biologist.

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"A small balloon is attached to the fish when they are released through the spillway. The fish are recovered in the tailrace area of the dam and inspected for injuries," said Smith.

Other testing will involve releases of complex sensor devices that will detect and record precise data like speed, turbulence, pressure and spatial position while traveling through the spillway. "We will analyze the data we collect to determine the best way to operate our spillways and optimize conditions for fish passage," explained Smith.

Public notices and other navigation lock information are available on the Walla Walla District Web site at: www.nww.usace.army.mil/html/offices/op/t/navdata/default.html. For more information about the District's anadromous fish research, check out www.nww.usace.army.mil/planning/ep/fishres/newmain.html.

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Schedule for 2006 Spillway Deflector Tests at Ice Harbor Dam
Walla Walla District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Date	Total Discharge (Spillway and Powerhouse)	Day	Test Period	Ice Harbor Tailwater	McNary Forebay	
28-Feb	Pre-test prep day	T			May draft down to 336.0	
1-Mar	Pre-test day Varies	W		Varies-up and down 338.0-346.0	336.0 to 336.5	
2-Mar	Pre-test day varies	Th		Varies-up and down 338.0-346.0	336.0 to 336.5	
3-Mar	**No Testing**	**F**		Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	
4-Mar	**No Testing**	**Sat**		Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	
5-Mar	55 KCFS	Sun	0700-1800	342.0	337.0 to 338.5	
6-Mar	95 KCFS	M	0700-1800	346.0	337.0 to 338.5	
7-Mar	55 KCFS	T	0700-1800	342.0	337.0 to 338.5	
8-Mar	95 KCFS	W	0700-1800	346.0	337.0 to 338.5	
9-Mar	**No Testing**	**Th**		Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	
10-Mar	**No Testing**	**F**		Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	
11-Mar	**No Testing**	**Sat**		Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	Navigation Lock Annual Maintenance March 11-25
12-Mar	**No Testing**	**Sun**		Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	
13-Mar	95 KCFS	M	0700-1800	346.0	336.0 to 338.5	
14-Mar	15-20 KCFS	T	0900-1700	338.0	336.0 to 336.5	
15-Mar	55 KCFS	W	0700-1800	342.0	336.0 to 338.5	
16-Mar	15-20 KCFS	Th	0900-1700	338.0	336.0 to 336.5	
17-Mar	95 KCFS	F	0700-1800	346.0	336.0 to 338.5	
18-Mar	15-20 KCFS	Sat	0900-1700	338.0	336.0 to 336.5	
19-Mar	15-20 KCFS	Sun	0900-1700	338.0	336.0 to 336.5	
20-Mar	55 KCFS	M	0700-1800	342.0	336.0 to 338.5	
21-Mar	15-20 KCFS	T	0900-1700	338.0	336.0 to 336.5	
22-Mar	**No Testing**	W		Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	Pool Fluctuation in Preparation for Next Test	
23-Mar	15-20 KCFS	Th	0900-1700	338.0	336.0 to 336.5	
24-Mar	**End Testing**	**F**				

- Spill will be 15 kcfs during spill tests.
- McNary forebay may be at 336.0' anytime between 28 February – 2 March (pre-test days) and 11-25 March (scheduled lock outage).
- "Test Period" above represents the anticipates hours Ice Harbor project operations will be controlled to produce the desired test conditions. Project operations outside of these periods will vary depending on total Snake River inflow.